, Nature has divided China proper into four main sections, the North, made up chiefly of the valley of the Yellow River (Huang Ho) and its tributaries, the upper portion of the Yangtze Valley and the adjoining mountains and table-lands, the lower part of the valley of the Yangtze River, and the coastal regions south of the Yangtze. Each of these, in turn, has natural subdivisions.

„ CHINA PROPER: THE NORTHV

t£he North of China proper comprises most of the provinces of Shantung, Hopei (formerly Chihli), Honan, Shansi, Shensi, and Kansu and the northern portions of Anhui and Kiangsu. Topographically it shades off into a tier of new provinces, Jehol, Chahar, Suiyiian, and Ninghsia, which have been carved out partly from some of the older northern provinces and partly from what is often denominated Inner Mongolia. Its major stream is the Huang Ho ("Yellow River"), which, rising in the mountains and plateaus that fringe Tibet, by a devious route flows into the Yellow Sea./ It§/name describes its color, and this in turn is due to the vast amount of sediment which the river carries and which, lodged in shifting bars, in spite of the size of the stream, makes difficult or impossible navigation by all but the smaller craft.

With this sediment the Yellow River and some smaller adjacent streams—principally the Pai Ho on the north and the Huai Ho on the south—have built up a vast alluvial plain on either side of the Shantung promontory. This plain, which extends over much of Honan, Hopei, and Shantung, and over the northern portions of Kiangsu and Anhui, and which on the south merges with the delta of the Yangtze, was laid down in what was once sea

bottom. It is very level and extends for scores of miles without prominent hills or valleys.

In common with other fluvial heavy carriers of sediment, along its lower reaches the Huang Ho has tended to raise for itself natural dykes and a bed higher than the adjoining plain. This tendency, reenforced by the embankments built by man, leads to devastating floods. As its bed rises higher and higher between its dyke-like banks the stream inevitably breaks its bounds, and, spreading its waters over the surrounding country, seeks a new bed on a lower level. As a result its mouth has been now south and now north of the Shantung mountains, by shiftings which